

Smoky Lake farmers awarded Outstanding Young Farmer Alberta/NWT Region Winners

Olds, Alberta [March 23, 2012] – When Robert Semeniuk began his career resuming the responsibilities of the fourth-generation family farm, he started with 56 acres and six head of cattle at Smoky Lake, Alberta. Now Robert and his wife Angela have a successful diversified operation in which custom application alone totals 20,000 acres.

The couple was honoured at a banquet at Olds College last week where they were chosen the 2012 Outstanding Young Farmers (OYF) for the Alberta/NWT region. Banquet guests included the Alberta Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Evan Berger, Mayor of Olds, Judy Dahl and the President of Olds College, Dr. Tom Thompson.

Over the years the Semeniuk's operation has expanded into a custom operation of providing fertilizing, seeding, municipal consulting and accounting, and custom grain farming.

“What impressed us most is the variety of innovative equipment and practices the Semeniuks use in their operation,” says Luanne Lynn, 2nd vice president of Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers program. “They have perfected a system for custom grain bagging and storage, and they've implemented a number of technological upgrades such as GPS, WAAS and auto steering to maximize efficiencies on the farm.”

The Semeniuks use a grain cart in the fields during combining, and a grain bagger and extractor to take the grain directly to the elevator rather than storing it at home in bins. They've installed a grain drying system and grain bin yard with adequate ground work to provide year round access and proper drainage to the site. In 2004, the couple implemented a GPS system and WAAS signal and they use a fully integrated auto steering system that reduces overlap and driver fatigue. Their sprayer and swather both have auto steer installed, and the sprayer has mapping capabilities and can apply prescription maps.

Robert and Angela have two children, Gabrielle (6) and Tristan (four), who keep them active in community events and fundraising. They contribute to the local 4-H horse club, community association, dance school and the George Morris Centre. Robert is also a member of is the Alberta Reduced Tillage organization.

Celebrating 33 years of identifying great agricultural successes, Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers' program is an annual competition to recognize farmers that exemplify excellence in their profession and promote the tremendous contribution of agriculture. Open to participants 18 to 39 years of age, making the majority of income from on-farm sources, participants are selected from seven regions across Canada, with two national winners chosen each year. The program is sponsored regionally by ATB Financial, Pfizer, AB Farmer Express, Olds College, The Co-operators, Decisive Farming, Bayer Crop Science, AGRO, Central Alberta Rural Electrification Association, Pioneer Hi-Bred and Richardson Pioneer Ltd.

Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers for 2012 will be chosen at the National Event in Charlottetown, PEI, from November 28 – December 2, 2012.

For more information or a photo of Robert and Angela, contact:

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